RESTORATION REVIEW

Leroy Garrett, Editor

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THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. They do not live apart in cities of their own, nor do they speak some different language or practice some extraordinary way of life. Nor yet do they possess any invention discovered by the intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human dogma as some are. They live in cities of Greeks or barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and they follow the local customs in dress and food and the other details of daily life. Yet the constitution of their own policy is remarkable and admittedly paradoxical. They live in their own hometowns, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, but endure all hardships as foreigners. Every foreign land is home to them, and every home is foreign. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They love all and are persecuted by all.

In a word, what the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through the various cities of the world. As the soul has its abode in the body, but is not the body, so Christians have their abode in the world, but are not of the world. The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet holds the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prison-house, and yet it is they who hold the world together. The soul, immortal itself, dwells in a mortal tabernacle; so Christians sojourn among corruptible things, while they look for the incorruptibility which is in heaven. The soul is improved when it is hardly treated in the matter of food and drink; so Christians, when persecuted, increase more day by day.

Epistle of Diognetus (about 150 A. D.)

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The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today . . .

INTRODUCTION

Our special study for 197 3 will be "The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today." This will involve us in a consideration of the *nature* of the church as the body of Christ. The church is being challenged as never before, challenged to prove its role in God's plan and to verify its mission in the light of its present concerns. We will be accepting the challenge in part by entering into the dialogue.

What is the church's name or names, if indeed it has such? How is it to be organized; What is its worship, if there is any set order? Are there "five acts of worship" as our people have long claimed, or do we need to restructure our whole concept of the saints in assembly? What are the church's ordinances, if any? What was the role of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the primitive assemblies, and what does this say to us today?

What were the terms of membership? What was the nature of the unity of the early churches? Was there a "divine pattern" that was followed, thus making churches virtually identical, or was there extensive diversity? What was their practice in reference to the sabbath (Saturday) over against Sunday? Was Sunday the Lord's day and did they "break bread" only on this day? What is the mission of the church in reference to the poor, the orphaned, and those deprived of social justice? Is the church today under "the Great Commission"?

These are some of the questions we want to deal with, and we intend that our inquiry be objective, free from any sectarian consideration. So, of course, in the use of the term Church of Christ we are not referring to any sect or denomination that may use this term as the name of their party or parties. We refer to the body of Christ and only to that, to the congregation of believers revealed to us in the New Covenant scriptures.

We use the term *church* in this series with some reservation for we are aware that it is not a good translation. When the *Authentic New Testament* by Hugh Schonfield renders Mt. 16:8 "Upon that rock I will found my Community," it employs a better term for *ecclesia* than church. So does Campbell's *Living Oracles* in rendering *ecclesia* "congregation." such as in Eph. 1:23: "He appointed him head over all things to the congregation, which is his body."

We use "church" because it is so commonly employed, and it is likely to remain with us. What is important is that we give the term no *institutional* meaning. The church of the New Covenant scriptures is nothing more than the body of Christ, consisting of all those who are "in Christ," irrespective of the claims of sects and denominations. The church is

not the sum total of many congregations, for there are some “in Christ” who are in no congregation and there arc some in congregations that are not “in Christ.”

Neither is the church many congregations plus their agencies, as modern Disciples have concluded in their restructure program. The agencies may be made up of those who are in the church, which is Christ’s body, but the agencies *per se* are not the church. Neither is the church the hierarchy, as Roman Catholicism has so long supposed, a claim they are not reexamining. Again. the pope and his clergy may be *in* the church, but they are not the church. Neither is the church some “loyal church,” which is the claim of many a sect, for the simple reason that the body of Christ cannot be divided. By its very nature the church is one.

This is why the Methodist Church or the Presbyterian Church, or the Christian Church or the Church of Christ, or any sect or denomination is not the church. Indeed they are not churches at all, but parties within the church that ought not to be, for the body of Christ is one and indivisible.

It is noteworthy that every reformation effort has sought to restore the integrity of the nature of the church. Luther challenged the hierarchy’s claim to be the authoritative church, insisting that the church is the people of God and not simply the clergy, thus restoring the concept of the priesthood of all believers. Thus emerged “the reformed tradition” which has seen the church as the fellowship of all believers, which has been the historic distinction between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Recent changes in Roman Catholicism, which critics say has made them “more Protestant,” are really changes in the doctrine of the church.

Barton W. Stone, in leaving sectarianism, moved by degrees. Once out of Presbyterianism, he had his own synod which he finally decided was but another sect. So, in stating his case in the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, he bade all sectism adieu once and for all: “We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large.” It was thus a recognition of the true nature of the church that gave force to the Restoration Movement.

Alexander Campbell also sought to lift the true concept of the church out of the morass of sectarian confusion: “There is but one real Kingdom of Christ in the world, and that is equivalent to affirming that there is but one Church of Christ in the world. As to an invisible church in a visible world, schoolmen may debate about it till doom’s day, but we know nothing of an invisible church in our portion of creation” (*MH*, 1853, 106). Again he insisted: “There is but one kingdom of Christ, one body of Christ, or one church of Christ on earth” (*MH*, 1853,303). And so he attempted a definition: “The true Christian church, or house of God, is composed of all those in every place that do publicly acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and the only Saviour of men; and, building themselves upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, associate under the

constitution which he himself has granted and authorized in the New Testament" (*Christian System*, 77).

But it was his father, Thomas Campbell, that bequeathed to us that great definition: The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and none else can be truly and properly called Christians."

That is why the Campbells and Stone had no notion that they were involved in restoring the true Church of Christ in the world, for they realized that the church has always been, that by its very nature it is composed of all those who are children of God. Their task was, therefore to restore *to* the church things that were wanting. This is why they spoke of uniting the Christians in all the sects.

One of our chief concerns in this series should be an examination of the implication in Thomas Campbell's famous definition that the church is made up "of none else" but those that manifest "by their tempers and conduct" that they are followers of Christ. How easy it is for us to try to identify the church by its doctrines rather than by its fruit. Can carnal, worldly, insensitive people really be the church, however conformed they are to doctrinal soundness? It was belief in the *holiness* of the church that inspired that part of the Apostles' Creed (4th century A.D.) that read "I believe in the holy catholic church." Something is seriously wrong if modern believers are indifferent both to the holiness and catholicity of the body of Christ.

The reformers were concerned for a *free* church, free to be itself in Christ, and free to be diverse, The confession of Augsburg in 1530 included an article by Luther on the nature of the church to the effect that "the one Holy Church will remain forever," and that its unity does not depend upon conformity of doctrine so long as it is true to the gospel and the sacraments. And the Magna Carta of 1215 included the statement: "We have in the first place granted to God, and confirmed by this our present charter, for us and our heirs forever that the Church of England be free and have her rights intact, and her liberties unimpaired."

A free church is what reformation and restoration has been all about. Freedom from sin first of all, made possible by Jesus its head as the sin-bearer. Freedom from conformity to this world, which is the idea of *ecclesia* which is the church "called out" of the world. But also freedom from political and ecclesiastical pressures and coercion. Freedom from sectarianism and party strife, Freedom to serve, each according to his own capacity.

This is the church of the New Covenant scriptures, Paul taught that each member of the body was free to be his own man in the Lord, Even if wine is lawful, one is free *not* to drink wine: even though circumcision is neither yea nor nay in the Lord, one is free to be circumcised. "Each one should make up his own mind," the apostle teaches the Romans,

for “It is before his own master that he stands or falls,” and this is surely at the very heart of what the church is all about.

The church is the atmosphere and climate in which God’s children are nourished and thus become what their Father wills for them, This is why Paul could write: “The heavenly Jerusalem is free, and she is our mother.” (Gal. 4:26) —*the Editor*

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KEY 73 AND CHURCHES OF CHRIST

It would be something of a tragedy for Key 73 to come and go with out people hardly knowing about it, and one only needs to be aware of our capacity for insulation and isolation to realize that such is possible. The purpose of this editorial, therefore, is to call our attention to Key 73, along with the hope that it may encourage some participation in at least some areas of the brotherhood. It may be unrealistic to ask for a church-wide cooperative effort with Key 73, but it is consistent in the light of our changing brotherhood to expect both interest and support from many quarters, if only our people are informed.

As its promoters put it, Key 73 is “a cooperative, individualized common effort to make Jesus Christ known to every person on the North American Continent in the year 1973, and to seek for a response and commitment to him and to his mission in the world.” Every means and method of communication is to be brought to bear upon this objective. New resources for effective evangelism will be sought, and congregations of all denominations will be assisted in becoming more effective redemptive centers. Key 73 hopes to be “an overarching Christian canopy” under which all believers may concentrate upon evangelism in the forthcoming year. It will be an opportunity for 200,000 congregations (11,500 of which are Churches of Christ) to work simultaneously in evangelizing the nation, with all the advantages that will be brought to bear through various media and organization.

The goal of confronting every person in North America with the gospel is not only unique for the modern church, but it could go far in showing us the way to oneness. A divided church can hardly indulge in “Calling Our Continent to Christ,” so in Key 73 we will have something closely akin to “the unity of the Spirit” in the scriptures. The cliche “Doctrine divides, service unites” has at least some appropriateness to Key 73. Thai saying would be closer to truth if it said, “*Opinions* divide …

Key 73 is for real. Its leaders meal business. Rather than the “folk religion” that they feel pervades A men can culture, they want the Christ of the Bible uplifted in men’s minds Rather than nebulous myths, American nationalism, or even good citizenship, they want the risen Lord to be proclaimed in all his glory. While they realize that churches will be

different in methodology, they believe there is a “basic evangelical concern” that can unite them in this effort. Each church will, of course, be free to emphasize what it considers to be especially significant in the gospel story. Key 73 does not dictate or coerce, but it does provide the framework for this concerted effort in witnessing for Jesus.

This year will thus be a special kind of year, a year in which every believer will make a special effort to win souls. This will be a wholesome change for a lot of us who have hardly any testimony at all beyond “going to church.” Key 73 will help us do it, almost to the point of making it the thing to do.

At the heart of Key 73 will be a prayer thrust that will undergird the yea r of evangelism. This massive prayer effort will be launched during the Christmas holidays. Church bells, car horns, factory whistles. and sirens will summon 50 million believers to prayer each day at noon praying for the conversion of a continent’ Say the Key 73 officials: “Millions of Christians praying for even a few seconds at noon, could have a tremendous impact on the church, the nation and this decadent society.” They urge us to pray at that time that the news media will cooperate in the evangelistic effort, and that believers everywhere will work together in this effort. Pray also that the lIoly Spirit will infuse the effort and make it a genuine work for God.

Key 73 has a budget exceeding two million dollars, donated by the 140 participating denominations and ministries. It is directed by Dr. T. A. Raedeke, who has taken leave from his post as secreta ry of evangelism of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Dr. T. F. Zimmerman, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, heads the executive committee. The Salvation Army, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and Campus Crusade for Christ (who did Explo 72) have major roles in the effort. While the leadership seems to be more “conservative” or “evangelical,” the fact is that those churches that we think of as more “liberal” are warmly involved in Key 73, including the Disciples of Christ and United Methodist. It would figure that those churches that have been more evangelistical would be more apt to supply imaginative leadership. One blessing that could come to the church at large would be for those who have neglected evangelism to come to see its significance.

Key 73 has been in preparat ion since 1967, growing out of the Key Bridge Consultations. The office in St. Louis expects to coordinate the efforts of millions of church units across the nation. It will be a glorious use of mini-meetings as well as massive efforts through TV, radio, newspapers, and huge evangelistic rallies. There will be six major phases for the year. The first is “calling our continent to repentance and prayer” with emphasis on the Noon Prayer Call already referred to and a giant TV special on Jan. 6. Phase 2 is a call of our continent to the word of God, with emphasis on Bible study designed to cross every ethnic and cultural group.

Phase 3, extending from March 7 to Easter, is the heart of Key 73. Directed by Bill Bright of Explo 72. it will be a period of intensive Christian witness. This will be concluded by an Easter TV special. Phases 4, 5, and 6 are calls to the new life, to proclamation of the Good News, and to a commitment to Christ. All these will be motivated by 27 lay-witness type programs, including Bible study, literature, retreats, small groups, telephone ministry, and person to person witnessing.

What will our 11,500 congregations do about all this? There is of course no official commitment, and we may suppose that this is impossible. But at least one of our congregations, an innovative church in Jacksonville, Florida, is laying plans for cooperation with Key 73, and in such a way as to encourage brotherhood-wide participation. It will depend upon the leadnship in our congregations if more than this is done. This is our chance to give evidence to our own people, as well as the Christian world at large, that we are now mature enough to move out into a larger fellowship and do something real for Jesus. This would call for no compromise of any truth we may suppose we uniquely hold, unless it be the compromise of associating more with other believers. Believe me, our people are ready for a more liberal fellowship and a more gracious attitude toward other disciples of the Christ. They have long since grown tired of our narrowness and exclusivism. If the elders and ministers in the congregations will put our rank and file to the test by laying before them the possibilities in Key 73, I am confident that the response will be overwhelmingly positive. It will only take a little courage to take the step and tell the story, and then ask *What do you want to do?*

And if we really believe in congregational autonomy, then each church can decide on its own what God's will is for it in regard to Key 73. The central office stands ready to share its resources, free for the asking. Why not at least investigate by writing to Key 73 Executive Office, 418 Olive St., St. Louis 63102?

Out of that office comes a lesson based on 2 Kings 7. When four lepers discovered a camp deserted by the Syrians, they gourged themselves with food and selfishly bore away silver and gold to hide it. Then they realized the folly of their self-centeredness and said, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until the morning, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore let us go and tell the king's household."

Key 73 is indeed a day of good news. Let not our silence or our in action be our sin. Let Churches of Christ also say so. —*the Editor*

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A WIDOW ASKS: "WHAT DO YOU SEE?"

A teacher held up before his class a large sheet of paper with a small round black spot in the center, and asked, "What do you see?"

The class answered as was expected, "A black spot."

Even though more than 99% of the sheet was white, it was the small black spot that the class saw. Isn't that typical of the way we look at the life God has given us?

I have been a widow for many years, having lost my wonderful Christian husband after fourteen years of happy married life. Shall I bemoan these years of widowhood or be thankful for the wonderful years we had together and for the beloved son that I still have? Should I not rejoice that God continues to love and care for me?

In looking back over my life I can quote Paul's reassuring words with utmost confidence: "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord." Once when I was an ignorant, green college sophomore I took off for Mexico with the idea of furthering my education in a university there, knowing only one person in the entire country who would be able to make it possible for me to do so. But where would I find her? I "happened" into a hotel where this one person I knew "happened" to be using the telephone. She was a missionary's daughter and was able to save me from an otherwise impossible situation.

Times too numerous to mention have I been saved financially and only "in the nick of time." Once I had a debt that was too much for me. A hailstorm wracked the neighborhood, but it did only minor damages to my car and none to my house. But the insurance not only paid the car damage but also gave me money for a new roof. Even though I insisted that my house was not damaged and they didn't owe it to me, they asked me to take the money anyway, for it was easier for them to go on and pay everyone So I had money to pay my debt!

I can see these instances of God's loving care and I can see the bitterness of widowhood. I prefer to see God's lovely handiwork in all of nature and in the lives of those who love Him.

God has always answered my prayers, though I can now see that the answer has sometimes been no. One of my most fervent prayers was answered in the negative, and I am now grateful that it was. God knows what is best for us even when we do not. I have had to live boldly sometimes and make daring changes. God always helped me when I needed Him most. Life's uncertainties have strengthened my faith. It has been one step at a time, a walk by faith. I would be weaker now, I believe, if years ago I could have seen the way ahead to be clear and without difficulty. The Lord has a way of helping when there is no visible solution to the problem.

We all wish that we could erase things from our past, but it is heartening to realize that God can take even these things and put them all together for our good. When our labors do not bear good fruit it is probably because we do not intend good, for God can make blessings of our good intentions, even when all else fails. God magnifies the little deeds we do, turning raindrops into showers.

He teaches us that we are to do good to those who cannot return the good, but this is impossible for us to do except by His grace. One thing is sure, and that is that He will not allow our mercy to others to go unrewarded. Not only in heaven after awhile, but even here he repays us much more than we can ever help others.

May God help us all to see better, to discern what is important over what is unimportant, and to see all the good in the world and in our lives rather than the bad. This will help us to serve in the unpleasant places of life, and to love those who do not love us. *—Mrs. Margaret Williams, 1250 Afton, Apt. 48, Houston, TX 77055*

HOLIDAY TRAVEL NOTES

We've held up this first issue of the new year long enough for me to chronicle some of the events over the holidays that I think will be both interesting and encouraging. It is the latter that concerns me most — *encouragement*, for I see this as a great need in our distraught brotherhood. "If there is any encouragement in Christ …" pleads the apostle in Philip. 2: I, and this he does in reference to joy, like-mindedness, mutual love, and unity. The ability to encourage may well be a gift of the Spirit, closely akin to the gift of exhortation in Rom. 12:8. Anyway, far more than any tongue it is this gift, miraculous or not, that I especially covet.

But God's gifts are bestowed in what the Germans call *sitz im le ben*, among life's situations, and not in isolation from the people. God is not likely to bestow the gift of healing to one who is indifferent to the diseased or the gift of teaching to one who places a premium on ignorance. I am at least open for the gift of encouragement in that I am concerned that so many of our people have about had it when it comes to our traditional merry-go-round. Multitudes have already walked out. Many more are holding on only because they now have a glimmer of hope that our folk at long last are looking to Jesus more than to tradition.

What encourages a lonely soul more than anything else is for him to realize that he is not so alone after all. Not only is Jesus with him, but there are multitudes of others across the brotherhood who are really getting turned on to such strange values as love, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. We are pleased that this little journal is encouraging to at least some.

We frequently hear such as “I didn’t realize anyone else believed like I did until someone sent me your paper.”

Too, our folk who have grown downcast amidst all the oppression really get excited when they learn what is going on across the land. They can hardly believe their ears when I share with them some of my mail, tell what some congregation is doing, or what some editor is writing, or give an account of a unity meeting. “Really’” is a common response, and yet the good news is what a lot of them have been hoping for and praying about for years. We had better be careful how we pray to the Father and rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit unless we are prepared for things to happen!

This first story I am relating to you even took me by surprise, as hopeful as I’ve become in recent years. I was hardly prepared for the prospect of our having a journal issued among all wings of the Restoration Movement, edited jointly by a brother from the Christian Church, one from the Disciples of Christ, and one from the Church of Christ, the purpose of which is “to foster open and free discussion, and to rediscover the principles of our cherished heritage in reference to our present task.”

Meetings over the holidays in Atlanta and St. Louis have led to such a consummation devoutly to be wished. Committees have been at work for sometime among the Disciples and Independents with a view of dialogue between the two groups and in hopes of meaningful communication with the Disciples who are uneasy about what is going on in the Consultation on Church Union, which is threatening to take the Disciples of Christ completely away from their Restoration heritage.

The Atlanta meeting was different in that some Church of Christ leaders were invited to take part. Several were invited who could not attend, including Reuel Lemmons, who was kind enough to send a letter to the committees expressing his views. Ralph Sweet of the Sweet Publishing Co. was there, along with Gene Shelburne, editor of *Christian Appeal* of the non-class churches, Andrew Hairston of the Simpson St. Church of Christ in Atlanta, Victor Hunter, new editor of *Mission,* and myself accepted the invitation to share.

There were about 16 of us in all, mostly publishers and editors, and it was a soul-stirring experience. We began by each one giving a kind of resume of his spiritual pilgrimage. It was something else to listen to these prominent churchmen, either pastors of influential churches or executives in large publishing houses, let their hair down and talk “down home” about what God had done in their lives, their victories and their defeats. This sealed us even more in a bond of love, preparing us for fruitful discussion. But when it comes to reciting one’s ups and downs (they call that *vicissitudes*) I have to watch myself lest I overdo it. If I bore in on what has *really* happened in my life, they either would not believe me or would be uncomfortable in my presence. Since such a gathering needed no credibility gap I decided to move only in the periphery this time around.

I t would be a fine thing for our people if this kind of sharing were practiced extensively. Let brothers and sisters sit in a circle together on a first name basis and really become acquainted with each other, praying and rejoicing together in the Lord. We are going to have to do more than sit together in a large auditorium, in an atmosphere that makes us almost strangers, if we really come to enjoy the fellowship of the saints.

The Atlanta meeting decided that there should be such a publication as I have described, hopefully underwritten by some of our moneyed people, and to circulate among15,000 of our leaders in all major wings. W. F. Lown, president of Manhattan Christian College was asked to serve as editor among the Independent Christian Churches, Robert H. Muley, pastor of Court St. Christian Church, Salem, Oregon will edit from among Disciples of Christ, and I was asked to stand in for Churches of Christ, the last choice based more upon my willingness to be so daring than my journalistic ability. Ralph Sweet thought the choice wise since "You are considered something of a prophet among us," which, translated into more common language, means that since I have already lost all that one can lose with the powers that be I might as well take it on.

The St. Louis meeting was a gathering of the three editors and the committee chairmen with a view of deciding upon the format of the new journal. It will be a quarterly, drawing material from Restoration sources and from those who speak to the issues of our time, and its name will be *Fellowship*.

How exciting it is that in these blessed times in which we live things that are too good to be true are indeed happening! Look what is happening: a journal emanating from a group of concerned brethren representing our three major divisions, a publication that will face up to the issues that trouble us in a three-way dialogue, Praise the Lord!

The holidays also found me in Hartford, Illinois (near St. Louis) for the annual forum for unity and fellowship, which I have attended each year, save two, since 1958. It was a humble beginning, with Carl Ketcherside and I leading in the sessions, and with no one paying it much attention. But today it is different. They were there from 15 states or so and several foreign countries. The sessions are surely the ultimate in Christian freedom, with each invited brother at liberty to say what he pleases on virtually every controversial topic you can think of. No one gets excited if a thesis is presented in favor of situation ethics, evolution, or interracial marriage, One may get clobbered in the question session that follows each presentation, but even this is in a spirit of love without compromise of conviction.

The sisters of the little Hartford congregation prepare meals for the two-day affair, enabling those who come not only the convenience of a meal right on the premises, but several hours of exciting vis-a-vis communion. Even here charity rules, for an announcement is made that if anyone objects to eating in a meetinghouse he should feel perfectly free to go elsewhere!

This year we had represented the main-line Churches of Christ, non-class and one-cup churches, Independent Christian Church, the non-cooperative churches, as well as a lad from "Jesus People" and one from campus ministries. The spirit was out of this world, which I suppose is what *spiritual* is. Subjects covered were the validity of the "street Christian" movement, the basis of excluding one from the fellowship, the work of women, the nature of worship, and interracial marriage.

It was my lot to contribute to the last topic, sharing the podium with Hoy Ledbetter, editor of *Integrity,* who presented about as fine a paper as I ever heard. Down to almost the last person I surprised the audience, for they were expecting me to marry off their white children to the blacks, perhaps because of my known concern for the Negroes and minorities in general and for having taught in a black college. Some even complained to those who selected the speakers for that topic with "Why did you choose two liberals for that subject?" But it was because of my concern for both blacks and whites that I did something short of advocating interracial marriage.

Tapes are available of all the sessions, including an outstanding presentation by Carl Ketcherside on worship, who also presided over the sessions in a fair and effective manner. Berdell McCann, 127 Donna Dr., Hartford, IL 62048 can give you information.

On my way home I had sessions in Tulsa at the home of Dr. and Mrs. L. E. Edwards, where, on New Year's Eve, we had some 25 people gathered. I shared with them my views of God's intention for the oneness of man and nature in the Messiah as set forth in Ephesians. This was followed by each one in the circle saying a word of thanks or praise to God for his blessings in 1972 or what he hoped for in the Lord in 1973. How heartwarming it was to hear brothers and sisters together relating to each other in this way. Some of the sisters, with tear-dimmed eyes, praised God for their husbands, with the husbands responding in like kind. Others were thankful for their free congregation and for the help they received from each other. One brother told a touching story of how the Lord had delivered him from a tragic automobile accident. One young brother even dared to thank the Lord for fried chicken "so that Leroy can get out and help us like this'" That is one time I said amen. I explain to folk that I doff my hat every time I pass a chicken farm! This went on well past midnight into the New Year, with prayers, praise and thanksgiving. Then someone started that old song, "Count your blessings, name them one by one; count your blessings and see what God hath done." When someone observed that church life would be entirely different if "worship services" had such experiences, I explained that this illustrates the task before us, to restore this kind of spiritual excitement to our congregations. But it will have to begin in the homes at the grassroot level. The great lost power of the primitive church is the dynamic of "breaking bread" (almost certainly a reference to fellowship rather than the Supper *per se)* from house to house, where they praised God together, shared together, and demonstrated their love for each other. Big

church house religion can be and often is debilitation, but the chief problem is that nothing happens in the homes of those who attend the big congregation, or the little one for that matter.

On the last Sunday of the year I spoke twice to the Grissom Church of Christ, which meets in a school named for the deceased astronaut. One address was on “More than Conquerors,” based on Rom. 8:35-39. I observed that in Jesus we not only conquer but *more* than conquer in that with each victory we are conditioned for an even greater conquest. My lesson on the nature of the church pointed to its oneness, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.

Beside this the Grissom group ask me to take an hour to tell them what was going on here and there across the land. So I told them of the new journal that is in the offing, the Hartford Forum, the Workshop at Abilene that should attract 1,000 preachers with Carl Ketcherside and I both on the program. 1 told of the renewed interest, the increasing number of free churches, the changing attitudes in papers and pulpits. They were wonderfully encouraged by all this, realizing that they were by no means alone in the struggle. One sister told me that if I could give a monthly report on what is going on it would provide the incentive that the new group needs. I do this in part through reports in this journal. and that is the reason why, but I realize that paper and ink cannot do what 1 personal visit can do. This is why I want to be used as much as time and energy will allow in just such contacts. So don’t hesitate to invite me to come your way, if you think I can be of service, for I plan to accept every invitation sooner or later.

While in Tulsa we also began work on the 9th Annual Unity Forum, which is to be conducted there next summer or fall, the Lord willing. —*the Editor*

A sect or party is an elegant incognito devised to save a man from the vexation of thinking. —*Emerson*

Souls are not saved in bundles. —*Emerson*

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FORBEARANCE AND UNITY

It is noteworthy that the apostle would turn to *character* traits (virtues) in his great appeal for unity in Eph. 4. He first “begs” the believers to lead a life worthy of their calling, which has more to do with their fruit than with their doctrine. He writes of lowliness, meekness, and patience. It is unlikely that oneness is ever realized without

these, whether it be a business, a family, or a congregation. A good way to see the meaning of an idea is to understand its opposite. In this case it would be pride, arrogance, and the show of annoyance. These are hardly the climate for unity and fellowship. Paul is showing us that oneness, like all delicate human experiences, must be nurtured in a positive atmosphere of love and goodwill.

But the emphasis is upon forbearance born of love. “Forbearing one another in love” is the key to the unity that the apostle taught. The implication is important to our understanding of the nature of unity, which is that unity cannot be uniformity of doctrine or interpretation. Otherwise he would not call for *forbearance,* for there is nothing to forbear if everyone sees everything eye to eye. The call for forbearance infers that there will be difficulties and misunderstandings. Uniformity, such as may be found in a strict military situation or in a Communist cell, has no need for forbearance. It was likewise among the strictest sect of the Pharisees. They had their virtues, no doubt, but forbearance was not one of them, for when people are ruled by an arbitrary dogmatism there is little need for toleration.

Forbearance, therefore, can be a virtue only in a free society. It is free people who forbear and are forborne. The apostle is writing as a free man to a free people in Rom. 14:1: “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.” He is saying that believers do not have to be carbon copies of each other. There can be diversity in that one believes one way while another believes a different way. Forbearance can be real in a Christian community because all are equal, with no one accountable to anyone except the Lord himself. “Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls.” We forbear one another in love because we are together servants of another rather than to each other. Jesus as our judge liberates us from sitting in judgment on each other.

In an unfree society where men are subject to other men, or to a party or a system, forbearance is unknown for the simple reason that totalitarian structures allow for no variety or diversity. When the end in view is the welfare of the party, the virtues are loyalty, industry, and sacrifice. Not lowliness, not meekness, not patience. Unfree systems demand conformity of thought and uniformity of behavior. Religious sectarian systems are as much this way as political. So long as they are sectarian, which means that party loyalty comes before personal considerations, there is no need for an apostle or anyone else to plead for loving forbearance. Partyism cannot forbear anyone whose teaching or behavior threatens its very existence.

Forbearance is a beautiful word in that it implies a respect for personality, a reverence toward others. Its action turns toward us as well as toward others, for it calls for self-control and patient restraint. Webster sees *forbear* to mean “Keep oneself in check, control

oneself under provocation." A synonym is *refrain.* We may thus *encourage* others to speak or act, even when we believe they are wrong, while we *refrain* from speaking or acting even when we are sure we are right. Truth does not always need the protection we are so eager to give it. A brother's feelings may be more precious at the moment.

We may *constrain* our brother in love, which is to motivate him in that direction that is for his good, but we never *restrain* in love, unless it be a child not yet responsible for his conduct. This means that a brother has the right to be different from me. Forbearance means that I will restrain myself by not criticizing or judging him, allowing him to be his own man before the Lord. This is not to be that kind of toleration that assumes superiority or a "holier than thou" attitude, but that loving forbearance that accepts the brother just as much as if he agreed with me. When we are forbearing we cause one to feel at ease in our presence.

Some psychologists contend that we all have vibrations that we impose upon those in our presence. Either it is a positive aura of friendliness and kindness or a negative one of suspicion and hate. Few of us are exactly neutral. It is the kind of thing that leads some to insist that a dog can tell when you are afraid of him. If we do indeed put our vibrations, apart from what we say or do, we need to check them against Paul's list of virtues that lead to peace: lowliness, meekness, patience, and loving forbearance.

We may here have what can be called "the back door to unity" in that oneness is realized through loving forbearance, apart from all the ecumenical councils and unity forums we can muster. This also shows us how unity is "the unity of the Spirit" rather than our own doing. Forbearance is a fruit of the Spirit. When that fruit is borne, oneness will follow as sunshine the rain.

One thing is sure, in cultivating the grace of loving forbearance we are acknowledging that unity is something more than conformity or uniformity. Unity by its very nature is diverse, and in Christ we have the cohesive of love that binds everything together in perfect harmony.

It is coercion that makes for conformity, but it is forbearance that makes for harmony. —*the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

An effective change in communication among our folk is now evident in the emergence of the cassette tape. The old tape recorder-player was very much with us, to be sure —and was the downfall of many a good man who said the "wrong" thing at the wrong place! But we have largely outgrown that destructive use of electronics, and with the cassette we move to a fast and easy mode of sharing at a positive level. These recorders are cheaper, more compact, and operate with little more than a flip of the switch. And they are easily mailed. The cassette is a marvelous blessing for which we should praise God.

In the old days Ouida and I would read together upon retiring, and those are cherished memories. Nowadays we press the button of our cassette player and hear from folk far and wide, and we are impressed with the intimacy of it all, for it is as if that person were right there with us, whether we are in bed or not. Some choose to record rather than to write, so we get tapes from all over the country, which of course we welcome. Getting them all answered, in like kind, is something else.

But this cassette business is even more than this. Entire libraries of excellent material are being recorded on cassettes, and there are subscriptions available for monthly tapes that inform one of the latest developments in the religious world as well as commentaries on latest theological thought. And of course the Bible is available in more than one version. Excuses for ignorance are vanishing even for those who do not read well.

An Omaha newspaper has disclosed that Boys Town is, by conservative estimates, worth $209 million, with a $25 million annual income. Due to the disclosure, Archbishop Sheehan, who controls the school's board, cancelled the two annual appeals for funds, one at Easter and the other at Christmas, with the famous stamp, "He ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother." As recently as 1970 the Boys Town post office was deluged with 34 million pieces of mail. That year alone $17 million came in. *Fortune* magazine has ranked the home 230th in the nation's 500 top industrials. Since the disclosure the home has had to set up a special office to handle complaints. Already more than 1,000 complaints have come from donors. As a consequence of all this Boys Town's trustees are reassessing the school's role and are designing a program commensurate to its wealth. Few people are aware that there is a similar home in the same area with Boys Town, an institution worthy of support that has struggled through the years.

A new book entitled *Healers of the Mind,* which is a compilation of testimonials of ten psychiatrists, reveals that when people are in trouble 42% of them that ask for help go to a clergyman, while only 18% consult psychiatrists and psychologists. This is a sobering fact, for it raises the question as to how well qualified professional ministers are for such a responsibility. The psychiatrists conclude that "Learning to trust" is the secret to good mental health. And so one of them writes: "Those who heal the mind are like mothers who listen patiently and attentively to the troubles of others."

The Pat Boone family has chartered a 747 jet for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where they will film a TV special. Dr. Roy Blizzard, one of our preachers and a Hebrew professor at Texas, will lecture along the way. There will be an airborne communion service on the way over, as well as special services at the Garden Tomb. April 4-13 is the date, and you can go along for $888. Write to Gaylord Briley, Inc., Box 1, Red Hill. Pa, 18076.

Interesting news items from the world of Roman Catholicism: More than a dozen dioceses have joined Key 73 … Some organizations are working for "planned parenthood" in Central America, but oppose both sterilization and abortion … In the United States 68% of Roman Catholic women are now using birth control methods forbidden by Pope Paul's *Humanae Vitae* … These are mostly younger women, and it is believed that this rebellion will eventually lead to a change in the church's doctrine … Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan and 100 others picketed New York's St. Patrick's cathedral and passed out "blood-stained" leaflets in protest of Cardinal Cooke's "sad and strange silence" on the resumed bombing of North Vietnam … The Catholic Relief Services have set up 33 centers in Nicaragua to help the earthquake victims.

Insearch is a research committee composed of more than 80 religious leaders, directed by Dr. John E. Beirsdorf of the National Council of Churches, that recently issued a report on its 18-month study of religion in America. It is funded by the Dayton Foundation. Some of their interesting conclusions: Small churches rated loving as their chief value, much higher than most Americans rate it. Larger groups valued honesty and ambition higher, and religious knowledge was esteemed by larger groups more than by smaller groups. Division in organized religion may come in form of a "religion of the state" with the likes of Billy Graham and President Nixon on one side, and the more traditional Judeo-Christian religion that "brings judgement to bear" on political institutions on the other side.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I don't know how much longer God is going to tolerate the carryings on of some of the brethren in their legalistic handling of cases within the church, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. The church in Athens, Alabama was split over a bathing suit worn by the daughter of the minister; and the shameful handling of the Boone's parents' case in Nashville. Believing in Rom. 8:28 as I do, I have to know that it is all working together for good. One blessing is that thousands of people are getting their eyes opened to the narrow, legalistic, sectarian spirit that still abounds. But thank God it is not all that way, for rays of

hope are bountifully scattered here and there if one looks for it. —*Talmadge McNabb, 1401 Elm, El Paso 79930*

Neither do we want to be part of an Ichabod church. Thank you for providing the series by brother Crowhurst, a sincere seeker after God who shall not fail in his search, for the Lord will reward those that seek him earnestly. —*Paul Logue, 221 Joy Ave., Webster Groves, Mo. 63119*

Churches of Christ (Disciples) in this country continue to drop in membership totals, but are playing a full part in ecumenical discussion. In England the Congregational and the Presbyterian Churches have united and formed the United Reformed Church, with whom we are to have conversations that lead to a union. Of our local churches only a few are strong, with many facing problems of qualified leadership. —*William Arthur, 148 Carmunnock Rd., Glasgow, Scotland*

We are enjoying your mini-meetings almost as much as you are. Good reporting! —*Mrs. A. V. Mansur, Galt, Ca.*

You mis-judge the bumper sticker "Love it or Leave It." The message is not "If you criticize the country, then get out." The message is "If you don't like our government, a republic, then get out and go to a dictatorship government." The biggest promoters of this bumper sticker are conservatives, and you know how critical they are of certain aspects of the government. —*Max Watson, 2603 Guadalupe St., Austin, Texas*

At our 25th annual fellowship this fall we had a fine gift by Finis Caldwell of his whole library of 2200 books. Last fall we had 112 enrolled. This fall 158. So we are busy. Now we have had 5,064 enrolled in 25 years. Pray for us. —*Steve Eckstein, Church of Christ Bible Chair, Eastern New Mexico U., Portales 88130*

(I know of no educational work among us more deserving of your support, and where one can get more mileage for the dollar, than Steve Eckstein's ministry at the university in Portales. Why not write and ask to be placed on the mailing list for reports? You may decide you'd like to lend a helping hand, which they badly need just now. —*Ed.*)

I enjoy reading your little journal very much. How thankful I am for your efforts in the interest of unity. —*George O. McQueary, 288 Arlington Dr., Ukiah, Ca. 95442*

What I Will Do To Promote Unity

1. I will pray for those with whom I disagree. This will cleanse me of bitterness and suspicion.

2. I will stop using dangerous words. I will stop calling "liberal" those with whom I disagree. I will remember that people understand "liberal" differently: to some "liberal" means endorsement of the *Today's English Version,* others as denial of the inspiration of the Bible; to some "liberal" means having Bible classes, others as having no classes. To

some "liberal" means reading or writing for a certain journal, others as espousing ecumenism; to some "liberal" means changing the order of worship, others as minimizing the importance of worship.

I will stop calling "legalist" those with whom I disagree. I will remember that people understand "legalist" differently: to some "legalist" means preference for the *King James Version,* others as emphasis on guilt above grace; to some "legalist" means preference for sermons peppered with twenty scriptures, others as belief in racial discrimination; to some "legalist" means undue concern over a Christian earning a Ph.D., others as condemnation of religious books other than the Bible; to some "legalist" means reluctance to eat in a church building, others as demanding laws which God did not make.

I will spell out exactly the issue on which a brother and I disagree. I will not obfuscate the issue or impugn my brother by using these words.

3. I will read a variety of Church of Christ literature. I will not accept second-hand information: I will go to the primary sources. For myself I will read what is said in *Mission Messenger, Firm Foundation, Restoration Review, Spiritual Sword, gospel Advocate,* and *Mission.* Books talked about in the brotherhood I will read for myself. Before reaching conclusions on *Axe at the Roots, A New Song, voices of Concern,* and *Voices of Action,* I will read them.

4. I will realize that no brother is obligated to answer to me. I will not brandish an imprimatur seal. If I am personally curious about a brother's belief, or for a rare reason it becomes absolutely necessary that I know a brother's belief, I will ask him. If error needs exposure, I will first go to the erring brother.

5. I will neither engage in gossip nor listen to it, much less will I publish rumors, I will not engage in crusades intended to destroy a brother. I will disfellowship him if necessary, but I will love him. I will be decent to him. I will do to him as I would he do to me. —*Nell Gallagher, College Church of Christ, 3200 N. Ben Jordan, Victoria, Texas 77901*

MORE RESPONSES

Your *Explo* article certainly hit the old nail on the proverbial head. We kept three young men (had asked for nine) and enjoyed them all, one from Oregon, one from Miami, one from New Orleans. Our own Bob also registered and attended most of the sessions. He too was blessed. I t amazes me that they are still dragging out 2 John 9-11 for this kind of application. It must be that they simply haven't read the chapter. Satan is still using scripture to attain his end. —*Dick Smith, 1420 Drury Dr., Dallas 75232*

I agree with you 100% about *Explo*. This has been my way of thinking for years. We should all be one body in the Lord, even though there are differences of opinion. I believe that *Explo* was by God's providence. One of the girls here who attended brought back a report that was heart warming. —*Eula Kahrig, rt. 3, Pataskala, Ohio 43062*

We so enjoy your paper. It has been one of the things that has kept me from throwing up my hands in despair and turning my back on the institutional church. May God continue to bless your work. —*Mrs. Paul Dow, 1047 N. Avon, St. Paul 55103*

I have been sitting here praising God for your article on *Explo* 72 and Churches of Christ. Since we are *so sure* we have *all* the truth and the Bible is our only creed, it isn't even good common sense for our leadership to shy away from such an opportunity, Praise the living God that he can work without *our* leadership and *our* sanction . . . We worship at a "one cup" congregation, so you can imagine what a "shake up" it is when we begin to see the real and living Jesus and try to raise Him above rituals. But it is so wonderful to know that He is *real* and that the Holy Spirit dwells within us! —*Nancy Fancer, Box 806, Mena, Ak. 71953*

As I read your comment about starting a woman's lib movement in the Church of Christ, I burst out laughing. But I suppose the situation you describe is more tragic than funny. The same can be said for all our traditions. Recently I heard a church member recite all the cliches about Noah building the ark, and no one could convince him that if Noah had been a poor carpenter and had mismeasured the timber, he would have been lost no matter how right his heart was with God, —*Barnett Jewell, Farmersburg, In, 47850*

The travel letters of Alexander Campbell have been especially good, The more I read of Campbell the more his thoughts impress me. —*Alvin C Rose, Box 203, Ashland City, Tn. 37015*

The personal glimpses of brethren I've often heard of but haven't met are delightful. Do keep them up. —*Larry C. Jackson, 7515 Northcrest, Austin, Tx. 78752*

The paper you edit really blows my mind I I get the most out of the encouraging news you include about congregations who are becoming more open to the Spirit's leading and who are throwing off the shackles of sectarianism. The travel letters of Campbell are very informative and challenging. The congregation here is quite open-minded as far as Churches of Christ go. The elders know our views that instrumental music is not a matter of fellowship, and that we are open on tongues and other spiritual gifts. Still they allow us to teach and work with the young people. —*Name withheld by request*

How very much I would like to be at Abilene to see you walk on the water! What I mean is that if you and Carl can appear at ACC together, nothing is impossible. —*Dale Crain, Project Challenge, Box 301, La Mirada, Ca. 90638*

I enjoy *Restoration Review,* for it is very refreshing. Thank you for being so open-minded. May the Lord bless you and continue using you to bring His Body together. —*Martha Davis, 3605 Oak Springs, Austin, Tx. 78721*

I find Restoration *Review* stimulating and timely to our present state of divided affairs among the heirs of the Restoration Movement. I hope and pray that more of our brethren will find a way to embrace more spiritual concern for others and abandon the stance of

semantic dogmatism which often hinders individuals in their search for God's will and ways and prevents the peaceful co-existence of fellow men … After almost 60 years in the church I am more and more convinced that each person must build his own faith and that we should seek to help each other in that process rather than to be constantly sitting in judgment upon the acceptability of the other person's faith before God. With Paul, I think we should seek to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. —*Thomas W. Rogers, 4701 Church wood Dr., Nashville, Tn. 37220*

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OFFICE NOTES

We are enlarging this journal with this issue, adding at least 40 extra pages for the year. The subscription price will be 2.00, new and renewal. We have issued a paper for 20 years at only 1.00 a year, which is an embarrassingly low price in these days of high prices. But it must still be a bargain, 200 pages of reading matter for only 2.00, if indeed if it worth reading at all. But to those who help us with clubs of names the price remains at 1.00 per subscription in lists of five or more. We hope this will encourage you to get up a list of names for the new volume.

The theme for 1973 will be *The Church of Christ: Then and Now.* Our intention is to study with you the nature of the New Covenant ecclesia as revealed in the scriptures, its succeeding history, and its condition in our own day. We propose to take an honest look at the primitive church's organization, worship, teaching, name, methods, mission. We'll take a look at the world in which it emerged and seek to discover just what God intended it to be. And we'll be taking a fresh look at some of the familiar passages about the church to see if we have been sufficiently fair in our interpretations.

The volume for 1972 will be bound with the volume for 1971 into a beautiful hardback, entitled *The Restoration Mind.* The price will be nominal. You should reserve your copy now, but you need send no money. We will bill you with the book.

Two books about demons will fascinate you and inform you. *Demon Experiences,* which is a compilation of demon experiences around the world. *Demons in the World Today* by Merrill Unger, Ph. D., is a responsible study of occultism in the light of God's word. The first is 1.25, the second 1.95, both paperbacks.

For only 9.95 we will send you almost 1200 pages of the *Millennial Harbinger* by Alexander Campbell. Abridged into two handsome volumes, they have some of Campbell's best writings.

The Jesus People is about old-time religion in the age of Aquarius. It tells you about the hippie church, Christian communes, and the Jesus people as a social movement. 2.95.

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